

Roman over the Anglican Church, in making use of enthusiasm instead of driving it into dissent. The difference is in part due to a difference of organisation. The English Primate, being only the head of the episcopal system, is not in a position to create a rival to it. The Pope, on the other hand, is so far above the other Bishops that he can afford to govern and use a parallel organisation, such as that of the Jesuits. In the Middle Ages he did the same with the friars. In the eyes of the English Bishops they were successful dissenters: they emptied the churches, they formed rival congregations. But in the eyes of the Italian Cardinals they were the Pope's own regiment of missionaries: they upheld his authority against Anglican murmurings, and they protected the Catholic faith against heretics. If the authority of Rome was thrown off by the English Church, the friars, being a privileged body outside the episcopal jurisdiction, would be little better than dissenters. It could not be expected that the Bishops would favour the continued existence of such dangerous rivals to the secular clergy. Nor was there anything to hope from the goodwill of the State, if the Pope's protection was rendered void. The friars were obnoxious to the secular government also, because one of the privileges which they held most tenaciously was that of complete exemption from taxes. They were not liegemen of the King, and their property, being by a fiction supposed to belong to the Pope, could not be touched by England.¹ They knew that if the movement for separation from Rome took effect, there was an end to their privileges, perhaps to their very existence, and their enemies already considered the abolition of the four orders a possibility of the near future.²

Attached in this way to the power of the Pope by every interest and tradition, they were his most active agents in England. They sold his indulgences, privileges, and livings. They advertised themselves as 'better cheap than other procurators' on account of their high favour at the Papal Court.³ When, therefore, Wycliffe advanced from criticism of the Papal action to denunciation of the Papal power, they felt

» Wals., i. 323-4 ; S. J57. *W^h liL*
384 ; Matt., 50.

¹ *Franciscana*, 605.

» S. J8. *W_t* iii. 400.